

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----038846 241831Z /46

O R 241720Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 2727
INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS
AMEMBASSY NICOSIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 5357

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, TU, CY, GR
SUBJ: TURKISH CONCERN OVER POSSIBLE MCGOVERN AMENDMENT

1. SUMMARY: FOREIGN MINISTER OKCUN EXPRESSED CONCERN JULY 24 ABOUT SEVERAL ASPECTS OF THE MCGOVERN AMENDMENT. HE SAID THIS AMENDMENT WOULD WIDEN THE SCOPE OF THE PRESENT EMBARGO AND INSERT THE US INTO BILATERAL GREEK-TURKISH RELATIONS. HE FEARED THAT IT WOULD ENCOURAGE GREEK INTRANSIGENCE BOTH ON CYPRUS AND IN THE AEGEAN. HE WARNED THAT IT WOULD BE "VERY DIFFICULT" FOR ANY TURKISH GOVERNMENT TO NEGOTIATE WITH THE USG ABOUT REACTIVATING THE BASES OR IMPROVING OUR RELATIONS IF THIS AMENDMENT WERE PASSED. END SUMMARY.

2. FOREIGN MINISTER OKCUN CALLED ME LATE AFTERNOON JULY 24 TO WARN THAT PASSAGE OF AN AMENDMENT SUCH AS THAT BEING CONSIDERED BY SENATOR MCGOVERN AND OTHERS WOULD BE "DANGEROUS" FOR TURKISH-AMERICAN RELATIONS (I WAS ACCOMPANIED BY PECK.) KEYING HIS COMMENTS TO A DRAFT AMENDMENT WHICH HE SAID WAS CURRENT AS OF JULY 21, OKCUN MADE THE FOLLOWING POINTS:

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--THE SCOPE OF THIS AMENDMENT IS BROADER THAN THAT OF THE PRESENT EMBARGO WHICH IS TIED ONLY TO THE CYPRUS QUESTION. THE AMENDMENT WOULD INVOLVE THE UNITED STATES IN ALL ASPECTS OF TURKISH-GREEK RELATIONS. IT WOULD ENCOURAGE GREECE TO LEAVE ALL ITS PROBLEMS WITH TURKEY UNSETTLED. HE ADDED THAT, IN ANY EVENT, THE GREEKS PREFER THE STATUS QUO.

--THE AMENDMENT SPEAKS OF MAINTAINING THE "PRESENT BALANCE OF MILITARY STRENGTH" AMONG GREECE AND TURKEY. OKCUN SAID SUCH A BALANCE CANNOT MAKE ANY SENSE SINCE TURKEY HAS A VERY LONG BORDER WITH THE SOVIET UNION, WHICH GREECE DOES NOT. TURKEY ALSO HAS OTHER CONSIDERATIONS WHICH AFFECT ITS MILITARY REQUIREMENTS.

--THE AMENDMENT IN EFFECT REDUCES THE TOTALITY OF TURKISH-AMERICAN RELATIONS TO THE PROBLEM OF CYPRUS, AND IF APSESSED THE IMPROVEMENT OF TURKISH-AMERICAN RELATIONS WOULD APPEAR TO DEPEND ENTIRELY ON CYPRUS. TURKEY DOES NOT BELIEVE THAT ITS RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES SHOULD BE VIEWED EXCLUSIVELY THROUGH THE "SPECTACLES" OF THE CYPRUS PROBLEM.

--THIS AMENDMENT WOULD BE "TANTAMOUNT" TO MAINTENANCE OF THE EMBARGO, SINCE IT WOULD ENCOURAGE THE GREEKS TO LEAVE CYPRUS AS AN "OPEN WOUND" AND TO FRUSTRATE NEGOTIATIONS IN ORDER TO INFLUENCE CONGRESS.

3. WITH THESE POINTS IN MIND, OKCUN SAID THE TURKISH GOVERNMENT HOPED THE ADMINISTRATION WOULD DO ITS BEST TO HAVE THE EMBARGO LIFTED WITHOUT ANY AMENDMENTS. IF AN AMENDMENT WAS ACCEPTED SUCH AS THAT PROPOSED BY SENATOR MCGOVER, OKCUN SAID IT "WOULD BE VERY DIFFICULT, CONFIDENTIAL

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IF NOT IMPOSSIBLE" FOR THE TURKISH GOVERNMENT TO PRESENT THIS TO TURKISH PUBLIC OPINION AS A POSITIVE STEP IN TURKISH AMERICAN RELATIONS. THIS WOULD CAUSE "GREAT DIFFICULTIES" IN REACTIVATING THE BASES, AND IT WOULD BE VERY DIFFICULT FOR THE GOT TO DEFEND ANY ACTION TOWARD IMPROVEMENT OF OUR RELATIONS.

4. WHEN I ASKED OKCUN IF THIS MEANT THERE WOULD BE NO RESUMPTION OF NEGOTIATIONS CONCERNING THE BASES, HE BACKED OFF JUST A LITTLE. HE SAID "IT DEPENDS ON THE WORDING" (OF THE AMENDMENT). HE ADDED THAT, IF THERE IS AN AMENDMENT SUCH AS THE DRAFT HE HAD SEEN, HE BELIEVED THAT NO TURKISH GOVERNMENT WOULD BE WILLING TO SIT DOWN AT THE TABLE TO TALK ABOUT AN IMPROVEMENT IN TURKISH-AMERICAN RELATIONS.

5. IN REPLY, I SAID THAT I WAS WITHOUT INSTRUCTIONS, BUT MY INFORMATION WAS THAT THE ADMINISTRATION CONTINUED TO PREFER A CLEAN-CUT LIFTING OF THE EMBARGO. AFTER READING THE DRAFT AMENDMENT TRANSMITTED BY THE TURKISH EMBASSY, I MADE TWO PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS. FIRST THE AMENDMENT WOULD, IN FACT, REPEAL THE EMBARGO. ONCE

THAT STEP WAS TAKEN, I VERY MUCH DOUBTED THAT CONGRESS WOULD ACT TO REIMPOSE AN EMBARGO. SECONDLY, I POINTED OUT THAT THE REQUIREMENT FOR PERIODIC REPORTING WAS IMPOSED ON THE ADMINISTRATION, NOT ON TURKEY, ADDING THAT THIS WOULD BE A PROBLEM BETWEEN THE ADMINISTRATION AND CONGRESS, RATHER BETWEEN THE US AND TURKEY.

6. OKCUN WAS NOT MOLLIFIED BY THESE ARGUEMENTS. HE SAID THE GOT WAS TRYING TO KEEP ITS PUBLIC REACTION "LOW-KEY", BUT WAS VERY CONCERNED BY THE POTENTIAL ADVERSE EFFECT OF THIS AMENDMENT. HE REITERATED THAT TURKEY WISHED THE ADMINISTRATION TO PUT ITS FULL WEIGHT BEHIND LIFTING THE EMBARGO WITHOUT AMENDMENTS.

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7. EMBOFF SUBSEQUENTLY RECEIVED PHONE CALL FROM YARIM ERALP, DIRECTION OF DEFENSE AGREEMENTS, WHO HAD BEEN PRESENT DURING THE ABOVE CONVERSATION. ERALP WANTED TO CLARIFY OKCUN'S POINT ABOUT THE MCGOVERN AMENDMENT "WIDENING THE SCOPE" OF THE EMBARGO. TURKEY FEARED THAT THIS AMENDMENT WOULD INSERT THE US INTO STRICTLY GREEK-TURKISH BILATERAL AFFAIRS. THIS WOULD PAVE THE WAY FOR A REIMPOSITION OF THE EMBARGO IN THE FUTURE SHOULD PROGRESS NOT BE MADE, FOR WHATEVER REASON, IN RESOLVING THESE MATTERS. ERALP ALSO REVEALED THAT TURKISH CONCERN HAD BEEN STIMULATED BY A CONVERSATION BETWEEN NIMETZ AND ESENBEL JULY 21. ESENBEL REPORTED THAT NIMETZ HAD CALLED TURKISH ATTENTION TO THE FACT THAT THE MCGOVERN AMENDMENT WAS UNDER ACTIVE DISCUSSION IN THE CONGRESS AND HAD SUGGESTED THAT TURKEY VIEW IT "TOLERANTLY."

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOREIGN RELATIONS, AMENDMENTS, US CONGRESSIONAL PRESENTATIONS, ARMS EMBARGO, MILITARY BASES, NEGOTIATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 24 jul 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978ANKARA05357
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780303-0776
Format: TEL
From: ANKARA
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780725/aaaaavhe.tel
Line Count: 153
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 4fd1676d-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 20 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1902004
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: TURKISH CONCERN OVER POSSIBLE MCGOVERN AMENDMENT
TAGS: PEPR, MARR, TU, CY, GR, (MC GOVERN, GEORGE)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/4fd1676d-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014